

THE MOLECULAR BASIS OF ADAPTATION: A Critical Review of Relevant Ideas and Observations

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JOSHUA LEDERBERG

PRESIDENT

DEC 24 1983

Dear Dr. McDonald:

I thank you for ~~writing~~ your review of The Molecular Basis of Adaptation, for Annual Reviews, which I enjoyed and appreciated.

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There is one point, underlined p. 94, to which I feel I should respond. Speaking for myself (but I am sure also for Luria and Delbruck), we were never denying that mutation might be 'environmentally responsive'. We did, and I continue to, support what Muller called the 'molar indeterminacy' of spontaneous mutation. I will in fact try to find some of my own writings where I discuss the paradox of calling mutation 'spontaneous', when it occurred microscopically through chemically deterministic events.

You should recall that the challenge we were addressing had a now-forgotten vehemence, that e.g. antibiotics specifically induced antibiotic-resistance.

Yours sincerely,

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